



## Five Finalists Announced to be the 64<sup>th</sup> Alice in Dairyland

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**NOTE:** For pictures of the finalists, please e-mail [nicole.breunig@wisconsin.gov](mailto:nicole.breunig@wisconsin.gov).

HANCOCK – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection announced today the five finalists for the 64<sup>th</sup> Alice in Dairyland position. The next Alice in Dairyland will be selected from these finalists May 12 -14, 2011 in Waushara County.

Alice in Dairyland is a full-time public relations employee of DATCP and serves for a one year contract term. Each year, Alice travels more than 40,000 miles across the state promoting Wisconsin products and educating media, youth, and civic groups about the diversity of our state's agriculture industry.

"It's an honor to serve as Alice in Dairyland and work on behalf of Wisconsin farmers connecting residents to our state's \$59 billion agriculture industry," said Christine Lindner, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Alice in Dairyland. "Wisconsin's next agricultural ambassador will have an essential role in promoting our food, fiber and natural resources industry to encourage consumers to take action with their dollars in supporting Wisconsin agriculture, local producers, communities and economies by buying locally-grown products."

The five finalists include:

*Holly Melander*, Merrill, is an account manager for IPAP, Independent Procurement Alliance Program. Melander was raised on her family's maple sugar bush operation, Leafy Grove Maple, and was active in 4-H. She recently graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay with a degree in communications and an emphasis in public relations. She served as the Wisconsin Maple Queen in 2007 and interned at Cumulus Broadcasting and the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center. In college, she was an ambassador, peer mentor, and chair of The Ball for Autism. Melander has also been a freelance writer for The Business News and an account manager for Leonard & Finco Public Relations, Inc.

*Melissa Ploeckelman*, Stetsonville, is currently working on her family's dairy farm, substitute teaching, and volunteering for Wisconsin Farm Technology Days. She has been very involved in 4-H and FFA throughout her life. Ploeckelman graduated in December, after a semester abroad in Scotland, from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls with a degree in agricultural education. She served as a State FFA Officer in 2006-07 and the Wisconsin Fairest of the Fairs in 2009. During college, Ploeckelman was active in the Agricultural Education Society, Alpha Tau Alpha, and the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT), where she was a radio broadcaster for "ACT on Ag Radio."

*Amy Roden*, West Bend, works at Rob-n-Cin Farms, her family's dairy farm, and is a beekeeper. She was very active in 4-H and continues to be an Ozaukee County 4-H Leader. Roden graduated in December from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, where she received a degree in organizational communication. Roden served as the 2009 Wisconsin Honey Queen and the 2010 American Honey Princess, where she travelled across the nation to promote the honey and beekeeping industry through presentations, interviews, and classroom lessons. While in college, Roden was also the UW-La Crosse Campus Activities Board Cellar Coordinator. She is a member of the Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Agriculturists.

*Sarah Sacker*, Monroe, is a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and will graduate in May with degrees in dairy science and life sciences communication. She was raised on her family's dairy farm and was involved in 4-H and FFA. Sacker served as the 2005-06 Green County Dairy Queen. She is currently active on campus in the Badger Dairy Club, Association of Women in Agriculture (AWA), and the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA). Sacker is also a founding member of Wisconsin's first Collegiate Farm Bureau Chapter. Sacker has been an intern at Spring Grove Dairy and Sassy Cow Creamery, and she has worked at Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese.

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*Katie Wirkus*, Athens, is a data analyst at Security Health Plan of Wisconsin, Inc. Wirkus grew up actively involved on her family's dairy and swine farm and in 4-H. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in December with degrees in agricultural education and mathematics. She was selected as the 2008 Wisconsin Jersey Queen and the 2009 Wisconsin Valley Fairest of the Fair. Wirkus was involved in the Agricultural Education Society and Alpha Tau Alpha while in college. She volunteers as a 4-H swine leader and as the Educational Chairperson of the Marathon County Market Animal Show and Sale Committee.

The three-day selection process for the 64<sup>th</sup> Alice in Dairyland includes two community events open to the public. The public is invited to attend the Impromptu Question and Answer Session on Friday, May 13, 2011 at Camp Lakotah in Wautoma and the Finale Selection Event, which will be on Saturday, May 14, 2011 at the Wautoma High School and McComb/Bruchs Performing Arts Center. Tickets for both of these events are available by calling the McComb/Bruchs Performing Arts Center at 920-787-2189 or toll free at 888-987-2189, or by visiting their box office at 514 S Cambridge, Wautoma. The 64<sup>th</sup> Alice in Dairyland will begin work on Wednesday, June 1, 2011.

For more information on the Alice in Dairyland program or Finals, visit [aliceindairyland.com](http://aliceindairyland.com), [datcp.wisconsin.gov](http://datcp.wisconsin.gov), under *Business, Alice in Dairyland*, or contact [DATCPAlice@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPAlice@wisconsin.gov).

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